

Declare a Fast
Matthew 6:16-18
By Russell Earl

Thesis: I want to show what the Bible reveals about fasting.

Intro: 1. Fasting, there are some interesting questions about it.
2. We find examples of such in the old & new testament.
3. Today, we will look into what fasting is and how it applies to the Christian today.

I. What does it mean to fast?

A. What is a fast?

1. Fasting is the abstaining from food and drink for a spiritual reason
2. Fasting is for a set period of time, for a determined purpose.
3. In the Old Testament time, the Jews fasted frequently, though there was only one fast prescribed by the law. Once each year, on the Day of Atonement, the Hebrews were to “afflict” their souls (**Leviticus 16:31**), which meant fasting (**Isaiah 58:3**).

B. What is the purpose?

1. People may fast for various reasons; grieve over sin, loss of a loved one, etc.
2. Often the main purpose to grow closer to God by using this time to focus more about Biblical & spiritual things.
3. Church leaders today often fast on the eve of making important decisions.

II. Bible examples of fasting.

1. Christ (**Mt 4:2**)
2. David mourned and fasted upon hearing of the death of Saul (**2 Samuel 1:12**)
3. Nehemiah did as well when he was informed of Jerusalem’s devastated condition (**Nehemiah 1:4**).

B. A command?

1. We are not under the old testament law that included fasting on the day of atonement.
2. We are not commanded today to fast, however, if we do fast we are given commandments on how to do so (**Mt 6:16-18**).
 - a. Christ was speaking to those who would fast.

III. What about fasting today?

A. Fasting is not a substitute for godly living

1. A Christian is to live a godly life regardless if they choose to fast or not.

B. Fasting isn’t do be done to flaunt one’s spirituality (**Mt 6:16-18**)

B. Isaiah rebuked those who fasted then pursued their own worldly pleasures

1. **Isaiah 58:3**

Application & Conclusion:

1. There are benefits to fasting.
2. The Christian today must make sure its done without sounding a trumpet and in a way that pleases God.

3. Full Invitation

God's plan for the alien sinner

Hear – James 1:22, Romans 10:15,17

Believe – Jn 12:44, Jn 8:24, Mt 16:16

Repent – Acts 17:20, Acts 8:37, Luke 13:3

Confess – John 12:42, Romans 10:9

Be Baptized – 1 Pt 3:21, Acts 22:16, Col 2:11, Mk 16:16, Rom 6:3-4

Live faithfully – Rev 2:10,

Christians must:

Repent: Acts 17:20, Acts 8:37, Lk 13:3

Pray: James 5:16, 1 Jn 1:9